

Even in its humble beginnings, Dr. Hobbie knew the importance of building the newspaper's reputation and credibility among readers, and saw that it promptly appeared at noon each day. The Tonawanda News went on to be run by the first female publisher in New York state, Mrs. Ruby Hewitt, who played an important role in the growth and prosperity of the paper.

Over the last 125 years, the paper's circulation and reputation have grown tremendously; and all the while, the Tonawanda News and its staff have strived continually to provide the residents of the Twin Cities with accurate and timely news and information. Today, the Tonawanda News is known as one of the most reliable and accurate newspapers in Western New York. The journalistic standards that Dr. Hobbie, Mrs. Hewitt, and others instilled in the paper's staff over the years have not been forgotten; the paper remains committed to the values upon which it was founded, and the rich tradition that it has built.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the publishers, editors, and staff of the Tonawanda News, past and present, for all their hard work. I hope and expect that our "Hometown Newspaper" will be around for another 125 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Congress join me in celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the Tonawanda News.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this statement for the record and regret that I was unavoidably detained on Thursday, March 17, 2005 during Rollcall Vote Nos. 82 and 83 on H. Con. Res. 95, as well as Rollcall Vote No. 84 on H. Con. Res. 32. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on Rollcall Vote No. 82, an amendment offered by Congressman OBEY to H. Con. Res. 95, "no" on Rollcall Vote No. 83; an amendment offered by Congressman HENSARLING to H. Con. Res. 95, and "aye" on Rollcall Vote No. 84 on H. Con. Res. 32, expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the occupation of the Republic of Lebanon by the Syrian Arab Republic.

INTRODUCING THE "SMALL BUSINESS EXPENSING PERMANENCY ACT OF 2005"

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago Congress, working together with President Bush, enacted into law the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003. Among other provisions, the law strengthened and expanded the expensing provisions afforded to small businesses under Section 179 of the In-

ternal Revenue Code. As such, the law encouraged small businesses to make new capital investments, thus spurring our economy and creating jobs. I believe Congress should make this provision permanent and today I am introducing the "Small Business Expensing Permanency Act of 2005" to do just that.

Specifically, the Jobs and Growth Act increased from \$25,000 to \$100,000 the amount of new investment a business can expense—or deduct from income—in a given year. The law also increased—from \$200,000 to \$400,000—the amount of total investment a business can make in a year and still qualify for expensing under Section 179. Unfortunately, under current law, these provisions are set to expire after 2007.

My legislation will repeal the 2007 sunset. If the higher expensing limits are good for our nation's small businesses over the next two years, they should be good for small businesses indefinitely.

Small businesses truly are the backbone of our economy, representing more than half of all jobs and economic output. We should not take small business vitality for granted, however. Rather, our tax laws should support small businesses in their role as the engines of innovation, growth, and job creation.

Mr. Speaker, in difficult economic times, we must do all we can to encourage new investment and job creation by creating certainty and predictability for America's small business owners. The "Small Business Expensing Permanency Act of 2005" will help accomplish this worthy goal. I applaud the Administration for its consistent leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this much needed legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF MRS. BOY JIN WONG

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life of Mrs. Boy Jin Wong who passed away on Saturday, March 12, 2005. A resident of West Covina for nearly 50 years, Mrs. Wong was a businesswoman, breast cancer survivor, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and wife.

Mrs. Wong and her husband, Bing Tew Wong, opened the Great Wall restaurant in the 1950s just as West Covina was growing from less than 5,000 residents to more than 50,000 residents. Her son, Council Member Ben Wong, said "despite her limited English language skills, countless Great Wall customers will remember being warmly greeted by her and her enduring smile." When the Great Wall closed its doors in 2001, then Executive Director of the West Covina Chamber of Commerce, Fred Burkhardt, stated "the Great Wall is an institution of West Covina that is going to be severely missed."

Mrs. Wong is remembered as a generous person and someone who treated everybody as if they were honored guests. Mrs. Wong and her husband donated money for scholarships and to build a school in their home vil-

lage in China. She was an active member of the community, participating and contributing to numerous local organizations and charities.

It is with pleasure that I honor the life of Mrs. Boy Jin Wong. She will be greatly missed by her family, friends and community.

COMMENDING THOSE WHO FIGHT BLINDNESS IN AMERICA

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the wonderful work of The Foundation Fighting Blindness, The National Eye Institute and Prevent Blindness America, and I want to commend all patients affected by vision impairment and blindness for their perseverance and courage.

I want to express my admiration for Betti and Carlos Lidsky, who are the National Trustees of The Foundation Fighting Blindness, and whose lovely family has been affected by a degenerative eye disease. They are great examples of perseverance and commitment to the cause of fighting blindness and are outstanding national leaders.

As Co-Chair of the Congressional Vision Caucus, I join my colleagues in the constant effort to help individuals who suffer from vision loss.

My home state of Florida has the highest proportion of senior citizens in the United States, and it ranks fifth regarding the number of people at highest risk of developing blinding eye disease.

Vision impairment is a very significant health problem in our nation, despite being a preventable condition in half of the cases. It has been estimated that the cases of vision impairment and blindness can double by the year 2030 if there is no intervention.

We, as a society, have a profound responsibility to intervene and to take action in order to enrich the lives of those currently suffering from vision impairment and to prevent others from developing visual problems in the future.

We must continue to raise public awareness about the dimension of this problem, and to encourage prevention. In addition, we need to improve access to quality vision care, treatment, and rehabilitation services. We need to support continued education, research, and advocacy efforts.

We have had tremendous breakthroughs in research leading to improvements in the treatment of certain visual conditions, which improve the quality of life for many visually impaired patients. More research can be done, and we will enjoy more success. The National Eye Institute has been committed to promoting research since its creation in 1968, and we are grateful to its scientists for their achievements in the advancement of research for new treatments and cures.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending those who work tirelessly to fight blindness in America.